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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. EMBASSY DELEGATION INAUGURATES CYCLONE SHELTER IN COX'S BAZAR, TOURS FOOD SECURITY PROJECTS

DHAKA, DECEMBER 8 --- Dan Mozena, newly arrived U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, and Richard Greene, USAID Mission Director, accompanied Lieutenant General Francis Wiercinski, Commanding General, United States Army Pacific, to Cox's Bazar today on a one-day visit to disaster preparedness and food security projects funded by the U.S. Government. Commanding General Wiercinski is in Bangladesh this week to forge stronger ties with the Bangladesh Army around humanitarian assistance/disaster relief efforts, as well as other areas of mutual cooperation.

The delegation travelled first to Panerchara to inaugurate a Multi-Purpose Cyclone Shelter (MPCS), representing one of many examples of the strong partnership that exists between the Government of Bangladesh and the United States Government. Over 40 shelters have been built since 2008 in Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal, and Rajshahi districts at a total cost of \$10 million. Each shelter can accommodate up to 1,200 people in the event of an emergency. When not needed as a shelter, each MPCS serves as a fully furnished three-room schoolhouse for 120 children. An additional 10 shelters were built in 2011, with up to 100 shelters planned for the future.

After the inauguration of the multi-purpose cyclone shelter, the delegation visited USAID's food security program, SHOUHARDO II, in Ukhia. SHOUHARDO II works with the most vulnerable and marginalized households in the cyclone-prone, food-insecure areas of Rangpur and Chittagong division, reaching over 370,000 households. The delegation observed the process of food distribution based on an electronic database management system. They met with USAID-trained community volunteers who work with local administrators to monitor the nutritional status of children under the age of 2 and to counsel mothers on feeding infants and young children. And finally, the delegation toured a government and privately owned warehouse facility to witness how commodities such as wheat and vegetable oil are stored and eventually distributed to the end consumers.

Since 1971, the U.S. Government has provided over \$5.8 billion in assistance to Bangladesh. USAID administers programs in five key areas in Bangladesh: improving health and pre-primary education; creating income opportunities for rural poor; supporting good governance; enhancing food security; and strengthening disaster preparedness and providing emergency assistance following natural disasters.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8855500, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)